

Message Text

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SUBJ: SUB-REGIONAL SEMINAR: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:
GHANA APRIL 12-14

REF: STATE 93087

1. SUMMARY. GHANA ORGANIZED, AT THE LAST MINUTE, A POORLY-ATTENDED SEMINAR FOR WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES AS PART OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE 1979 UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT. SOME LDC SPEAKERS WERE CRITICAL OF DC'S ATTENTION TO SEPARATE SECTORAL ISSUES RATHER THAN OVERALL ISSUE OF TRANSFERRING TECHNOLOGY WHICH THEY HOLD TO BE OF HIGHEST PRIORITY TO LDC'S. END SUMMARY.

2. GHANA'S COUNCIL FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR), WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GHANA'S PREPARATIONS FOR 1979 UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (UNCSTD) HELD APRIL 12 TO 14 IN ACCRA A SUB-REGIONAL SEMINAR TOWARDS 1979 UNCSTD. USAID'S CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND EMBOFF ATTENDED SEVERAL SESSIONS INCLUDING OPENING SESSION.

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3. SEMINAR WAS HASTILY ORGANIZED. ALTHOUGH SEMINAR HAD LONG BEEN CONTEMPLATED, AND TWICE RESCHEDULED, CSIR ENDED BY SCHEDULING IT DURING WEEK WHEN ACCRA AIRPORT WAS CLOSED, AND THEN DECIDING AGAINST FURTHER SHIFT. USAID SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OFFICER WAS INVITED JUST FOUR DAYS BEFORE SEMINAR OPENED TO PREPARE PAPER, WHILE NUMEROUS RELEVANT GHANAIAN SCIENTISTS WERE

UNAWARE OF SEMINAR. FOR EXAMPLE, GHANAIAI CHAIRMAN OF

PROJECT MANAGEMENT GROUP FOR AID'S PROJECT ON DEVELOPMENTAL APPLICATIONS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DAST) WAS NOT OFFICIALLY INFORMED OF CONFERENCE; HE LEARNED INFORMALLY FROM USAID SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OFFICER ONLY A WEEK BEFORE SEMINAR OPENED.

4. SEMINAR WAS POORLY ATTENDED. WITH AIRPORT CLOSED IT WAS EXTREMELY AWKWARD TO REACH ACCRA (THREE OR FOUR HOUR BUS RIDES WERE NECESSARY). THIS, PLUS LAST-MINUTE ORGANIZATION OF SEMINAR, RESULTED IN ONLY TWO (OF ELEVEN) OTHER WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES BEING REPRESENTED FROM CAPITALS: UGANDA AND LIBERIA. DR. J.L.S. ABBEY, GHANAIAI GOVERNMENT CHIEF STATISTICIAN, THROUGH AVOIDABLE SCHEDULING CONFLICT, FAILED TO SHOW UP TO CHAIR ONE DISCUSSION GROUP, AND SEVERAL OTHER LEADING GOG OFFICIALS DID NOT ARRIVE AS INDICATED ON PROGRAM; ALSO REFLECTING HASTY PREPARATION.

5. SOME INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS WENT WELL. FOR EXAMPLE, JUSTICE A.N.E. AMISSAH, LEGAL CONSULTANT, SPOKE ON PATENT LAW IN GHANA AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER. AMISSAH, WHO IS ONE OF THE CONSULTANTS ON THE DAST PROJECT TO STRENGTHEN PLANNING AND ANALYSIS OF CSIR, WAS WELL PREPARED AND THAT SESSION BROUGHT OUT USEFUL MATERIAL. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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6. NATIONAL PAPERS FOR UNCSTD. GHANA HAS NOT YET PREPARED ITS NATIONAL PAPER. DR. DAVID LEWIS, CORNELL UNIVERSITY, WAS IN ACCRA UNDER UN AUSPICES TO ASSIST WITH THAT PAPER.

7. CRITICAL ATTITUDE. SEVERAL LDC REPRESENTATIVES DID VOICE GENERAL CRITICISM OF WHAT THEY PERCEIVED AS DEVELOPED COUNTRY EFFORTS TO IMPOSE THEIR MORE SECTORAL APPROACH TO DETRIMENT OF LDC EFFORTS TO FIND GENERAL SOLUTION TO OVERALL PROBLEMS OF TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY.

8. COMMENT: OVERALL, WE DO NOT HAVE IMPRESSION THAT SEMINAR ACCOMPLISHED MORE THAN A SMALL PART OF ITS TASK OF PERMITTING WEST AFRICAN REGION COUNTRIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON PREPARATIONS FOR UNCSTD AND TO CONCERT POLICIES TOWARD ISSUES. SMITH

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